

Senator Roger Wicker to Speak at Grand Opening of MSU Science and Technology Center

STARKVILLE, Miss.--U.S. Sen. Roger Wicker will be the keynote speaker at the grand opening ceremony for the new Mississippi State University Science and Technology Center at NASA's John C. Stennis Space Center in Hancock County.

The ceremony will take place Oct. 16 at 10 a.m.

The \$9-million research facility funded by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is the new home for the university-led Northern Gulf Institute and researchers from MSU's Geosystems Research Institute.

Other tenants include NOAA's National Coastal Data Development Center and an Engineering Branch of NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service.

Science and technology conducted at the center focuses on critical processes in the northern Gulf of Mexico including measurement and monitoring, physical and biological assessments, and impacts on the social and economics of coastal communities. Additional capabilities exist to evaluate watershed processes, hazards such as floods and storm surges, and impacts on food production associated with harmful fungi.

In addition to Wicker, the program will also include MSU President Mark E. Keenum and David Shaw, vice president for research and economic development, along with officials from NASA and NOAA.

Shaw says the 38,000-square-foot building has enhanced the abilities of MSU in addressing the pressing needs of this region.

"The research and educational programs developed at the MSU Science and Technology Center are nationally acclaimed, and the commitment to this new facility by NOAA and MSU is a strong example of our plans for continuing and expanding these efforts," Shaw said.

Computer resources and support are provided for the center by MSU's High Performance Computing Collaboratory. According to HPC2 director of computing Trey Breckenridge, computer resources and technical support are the lifeblood of the new NOAA Exploration Command Center located in the MSU Science and Technology Center.

"The new ECC at our MSU Stennis location is one of only seven in the world and provides a two-way communication system that allows scientists on research vessels at sea to

collaborate with scientists on shore as they all view live, high-definition video streams from remotely operated underwater vehicles exploring Earth's oceans," Breckenridge said.